

## **Consumers Urged to Use Contractors Licensed in Rhode Island for Flood Recovery Work**

*If your home or property has been damaged by a flood or other disaster, don't let unscrupulous individuals take advantage of you during this vulnerable time.*

The Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) reminds consumers that all contractors based in Rhode Island or offering services in Rhode Island must hold a valid contractor's registration license in order to perform most work on homes and other structures damaged or destroyed in natural disasters as well as commercial structures.

If construction work is going to be needed to restore or repair buildings - outside of the electrical, plumbing and mechanical trades - homeowners and businesses need to be aware that contractors are required to be registered with the Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board. They can visit the Board's web site at [www.crb.state.ri.us](http://www.crb.state.ri.us) to verify that a contractor is properly registered and insured.

The CRLB also offers helpful tips for homeowners to know when hiring a contractor to repair damaged homes.

- **Don't rush into repairs, no matter how bad it may seem, and things are usually pretty bad when it comes to water damage, please get at least (3) three bids.**
- **Never pay CASH, especially up front before work is started!**
- **Get proof that the Contractor is registered and insured. See the card issued by the Contractors' Registration Board.**
- **Be cautious about door-to-door sales pitches or flyers that are left on your doorstep!**
- **Ask family and friends or business associates for recommendations about someone they may have hired that was dependable. References are good but you can also check with trade organizations and verify credentials from the Board's website.**
- **Even for the smallest job, get proof that the person you are dealing with has a contractor's registration or the required license if he is a trades' person, for the type of work that needs to be done.**
- **Get your contract in WRITING, and be specific and detailed for every aspect of the work!**
- **Avoid large up front payments, and don't release final payment until all work has been completed.**

- **High pressure sales and exurbanite prices in these times are not unusual; use common sense and make sure you get multiple quotes for the same work.**
- **Permits protect your interest; make sure they are properly obtained, it is required by law.**

If gas or electricity had to be turned off due to high water levels, home and business owners must first make sure that a licensed trades' person is hired. Verification of licenses can be done by visiting the Department of Labor and Trainings website at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/profregsonline/PROLentree.aspx>.

The local building office needs to be contacted for issuance of permits so that the work performed can be inspected properly (a list of local building officials can be found at: [www.riboa.net/CitiesTowns.aspx](http://www.riboa.net/CitiesTowns.aspx)).

The local utility companies will also need to be contacted upon completion of the work and inspection of the work performed, to assure compliance with code before utilities can be restored. If testing is required of well systems, samples need to be sent to a proper laboratory for processing. An advisory from the Department of Health on testing well water can be found at: [www.ri.gov/press/view/11152](http://www.ri.gov/press/view/11152).